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INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR REVOLUTIONARY FRONT - FRETILIN
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RESISTANCE

To : COMISSÃO DOS DIREITOS DO POVO MAUBERE, Lisbon
(CDPM)

Doc. 1/87

This is not simply a gesture in recognition of favours, as though we were settling an account. We believe that any positive stand which promotes the defence of the Maubere People's rights is an act of political soundness and generosity, which neither suggests pressure being brought to bear from any quarter, nor any pre-conditions which might motivate such a position.

Unfortunately, we know little about the Commission's activities apart from what has been mentioned in the scant press cuttings which, with difficulty, reach us. Even so, we are absolutely certain that the formation of the CDPM was inspired by the conviction to defend a just cause, a cause of inalienable right, on behalf of which we are sure that great efforts have been made. However, we have to recognise the fact that the difficulties the Commission must have had to face, and will face in future are but a reflection of our difficult Resistance, the struggle of our People. Nevertheless, we are calm in the confidence that nothing will waver the objectives which the Commission intends to defend.

To offer something of ourselves, something which serves, at least, to assert ourselves as a People that knows how to express its own values, is another aspect of our Resistance. It is in this light that we would like to offer the CDPM a typical East Timorese house carved out of tortoise shell ... from out of our seas which, because of oil, are the object of the ambition of the strong and powerful.

There is so little we can offer you in the present circumstances ... at war for the last 12 years - years of extreme hardship and untold suffering ... We realise that it is not a marvellous piece of work, but we think that perhaps the care which guerilla Maleny Okar affectionately put into his hours of work may compensate for the lack of better artistic inspiration. The latter is hardly our fault - Portuguese colonialism fettered Maubere ideas and paralysed our People's artistic and cultural movement. If just over a decade ago Timorese handicraft served only to decorate the rooms of the administrators and the PIDE, today in the concentration camps our People make handicraft simply as a means to survive the hunger and poverty.

As well as fighting against the criminal occupier of our country, the guerrillas have tried to learn and practice ways to preserve the cultural identity of our People. They are, however, unable to be the exponents of Maubere art we would wish for.

After 12 hard years of Armed Resistance, with the backing of the CDPM's unequivocal solidarity, it only remains for us to express, in our own inadequate way, our deepest gratitude to all those who, as part of the CDPM, identify with the aspirations of the Maubere People.

...

With our sincere appreciation and consideration,

OUR COUNTRY OR DEATH!
RESIST AND OVERCOME!
THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES ON ALL FRONTS!

General Headquarters of the National Resistance Revolutionary Council, 15 October 1987.

President of the NRRC

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
FALINTIL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF